



PRAYER

Father God, we thank You that You are a sending God. Thank You that we are not sent alone or in our own strength, but empowered by Your Spirit. As we open Your Word, help us to understand Your mission more clearly and to trust the Spirit who goes with us. Shape our hearts to live sent lives for Your glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OPENING QUESTION
(OPTIONAL)

Share about a time when you were asked to do something that felt bigger than your ability. What helped you step forward (or what held you back)?



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John 20:21-22 (ESV)

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”

CONTEXT AND REFLECTION

John 20 takes place on the evening of Jesus’ resurrection. The disciples are gathered behind locked doors, afraid and uncertain about the future. Into this space of fear, Jesus speaks peace — and then immediately speaks mission. Jesus does not wait until the disciples feel confident, courageous, or fully prepared. Instead, He sends them as they are, but not as they will remain. The same Father who sent the Son now sends the disciples, and the same Spirit who empowered Jesus now empowers them. This moment reveals something profound about mission: it is rooted in the life of the Trinity. The Father sends the Son. The Son sends the disciples. The Spirit empowers and accompanies those who are sent. Mission is not an individual task but a relational and communal participation in God’s own work. This helps us understand why so many people struggle to persevere in mission when they attempt it in their own strength. Today, there are an estimated 430,000 Christian missionaries serving globally. Each year, around 6.5% leave the mission field, meaning nearly a third leave within their first decade. Significantly, around 70% leave for preventable reasons — such as isolation, burnout, lack of support, or unclear purpose. While these statistics focus on vocational missionaries, they reflect a broader challenge for all disciples. Many believers disengage from God’s mission not because they stop believing, but because they become tired, distracted, discouraged, or disconnected from community.

Jesus addresses these very issues in John 20. He sends His disciples with peace, with purpose, with people, and with presence.

- With His pleasure: The disciples are sent as people already accepted and loved by God.
- With His purpose: They are not sent aimlessly, but with clarity — to carry the message of reconciliation.
- With His people: The sending is plural. Mission is meant to be shared, not solo.
- With His presence: Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on them, assuring them that God Himself will be with them.

For us in Australia, far removed geographically from the original events of John 20, this passage still speaks clearly. Whether serving locally or globally, in workplaces, universities, homes, or across cultures, God’s mission is sustained not by human endurance but by divine empowerment. The Spirit is not an optional extra for mission — He is essential.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The disciples were fearful and uncertain when Jesus sent them. What does this tell us about whom God chooses to send on mission?
2. Jesus says, “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” What similarities do you notice between how Jesus was sent and how we are sent today?
3. Many missionaries leave the field due to burnout or isolation. How does understanding mission as communal rather than individual help address this challenge?
4. Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Why is the Spirit’s presence essential for sustaining mission over the long term?
5. Which of these do you personally need to be reminded of most right now: God’s pleasure, God’s purpose, God’s people, or God’s presence? Why?
6. How might Lifegroups and church community play a role in helping people persevere in God’s mission today?

Application

- Personally: Ask the Holy Spirit to renew your confidence that God is with you and for you as you live sent.
- Communally: Identify one way you can support or encourage someone else who is serving God faithfully.
- Missional: Pray intentionally this week for missionaries, pastors, and everyday disciples who may be weary or close to disengaging.

Closing Prayer

Holy Spirit, thank You that You are present with us and within us. Strengthen us to live sent lives, not out of pressure or fear, but from peace, purpose, and community. Help us to persevere in Your mission together, trusting not in our strength, but in Yours. In Jesus’ name, Amen.